

## REMARKS

This preliminary amendment is provided to change the format of the application to conform to U.S. practice. The amendments made to the claims are not made for purposes relating to patentability, and are not made in response to prior art or any objections or rejections to the claims. Thus, the Applicant has not intended to narrow, nor has the Applicant narrowed, the scope of any of the claims of the international application by way of this preliminary amendment.

Claims 1-17 of the international application are pending, as well as new Claims 18-23. The Applicant notes that Claims 9, 10, 11, 21, 22 and 23 are in an acceptable format as indicated in M.P.E.P. § 2173.05(f). It is further respectfully submitted that these claims are proper dependent claims pursuant to M.P.E.P. § 608.01(n). More particularly, each of Claims 9-11 and 21-23 refer to Claims 1 and 3 respectively, and include every limitation of the claim from which they depend. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 9-11 and 21-23 are in proper dependent format, and are therefore not subject to independent claim fees. It is understood under M.P.E.P. § 608.01(n) that the Applicant can later amend or otherwise place these claims in independent form, if any objection under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) should arise that necessitates such a change. The Applicant contends, however, that Claims 9-11 and 21-23 are clearly in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.75 and are indeed proper dependent claims. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if it is deemed necessary to effect the filing of the instant application, authorization is given to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 50-3581, although in such case the Applicant reserves the right to contest such a holding and petition for a refund of any overpayment.

The Applicant respectfully requests that this preliminary amendment be entered into the record prior to calculation of the filing fee, and prior to examination and consideration of the above-identified national stage patent application.

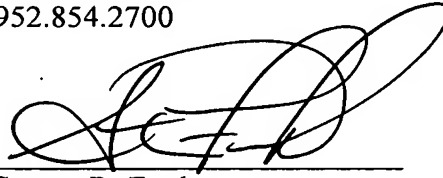
If the Examiner would like to discuss any issues relating to this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney of record at 952.854.2700 (ext. 11) to discuss any issues related to this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: December 20, 2005

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Funk', written over a horizontal line.

Steven R. Funk  
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